DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 307 007 JC 890 254

AUTHOR Smith, Al; Morris, Darline
TITLE New Issues, Problems, Programs and Research Ideas: Findings of a Statewide Study of Texas Community/Junior College Presidents and Chancellors.
PUB DATE 28 Mar 89
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (69th, Washington, DC, March 29-April 1, 1989).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrative Problems; *Administrator Attitudes; Community Colleges; Curriculum Development; Educational Finance; Financial Problems; Questionnaires; *Research Needs; State Surveys; Testing Programs; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS *Texas; *Texas Academic Skills Program

ABSTRACT

In fall 1988, a study was conducted to determine the major issues and problems facing the presidents and chancellors of Texas community/junior colleges, to identify solutions being implemented to address these problems/issues, to identify new curricula and administrative programs, and to assess research activities and needs. Questionnaires were sent to the 76 public and private community/junior college presidents and chancellors in the state. Study findings, based on a 71% response rate, included the following: (1) 81% of the respondents indicated that funding was one of their three major concerns, and 69% mentioned the newly mandated Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP), which requires all college students to pass a basic skills assessment test before they can take more than nine hours of college work; (2) recommended or tried solutions to the funding problem focused on the state legislature, with local tax reorganization and/or bond issues emerging as the next most cited solution; (3) with respect to the TASP, many respondents were conducting research and creating new programs to minimize enrollment losses; (4) among the new administrative programs mentioned by the respondents were board-approved strategic planning, institutional effectiveness programs, and executive loan programs; (5) most of the new curricula reported by the respondents were in occupational education; and (6) the three most frequently mentioned areas for further research were the TASP, enrollment/retention, and outcomes/institutional effectiveness. (JMC)

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NEW ISSUES, PROBLEMS, PROGRAMS AND RESEARCH IDEAS: FINDINGS OF A STATEWIDE STUDY OF TEXAS COMMUNITY/JUNIOR COLLEGE PRESIDENTS AND CHANCELLORS

by

Al Smith

Professor of Higher Education

Department of Higher and Adult Education

University of North Texas

Denton, Texas

and

Darline Morris

Doctoral Student

Department of Higher and Adult Education

University of North Texas

Denton, Texas

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the AACJC's Council of Universities and Colleges, 69th Annual Convention, Washington, D.C., March 28, 1989.

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In the Fall of 1989 we conducted a research study to determine the major issues and problems facing Texas community/junior college presidents and chancellors and to identify areas of needed research. These were the two major purposes of this study. Other purposes included (1) identification of solutions to these issues/problems, (2) the location of new two-year college administrative programs in the state, (3) the development of an inventory of new curriculum and instruction programs, (4) the creation of a list of current research studies underway on Texas community college campuses, and most importantly (5) the identification of needed research and research priorities in these same colleges.

This paper contains a description of this research. Hopefully, it will give you and your doctoral students some new ideas for research in our state, your own state, or on a national basis. We are currently using this report to develop a research agenda for some of the 100 plus community college doctoral students in our Community College Leadership Program at the University of North Texas (UNT).

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of our study was quite simple. In September of 1988, we designed a cover letter and two-page questionnaire to send to the 76 public and private community/junior college presidents and chancellors in the state. This survey research

questionnaire contained the following research questions:

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Please list and describe the top three issues/problems facing your college campus this fall.

2. In relationship to the three issues/problems you have just described, what major solutions are being tried or will be tried to solve these problems this academic year?

3. Please list two major new administrative programs or efforts on your campus this fall. (They should be programs that are in place and being tried for the first time under your administration.)

4. Please list two major new curriculum and instruction programs on your campus this fall.

5. Please list two research studies that you would like to see done on your campus this year.

6. Describe two research studies that are being conducted on your campus this year.

These six research questions were designed to help us achieve the major purposes of our investigation.

In October of 1988, we mailed a two-page questionnaire containing these questions to 76 public and private Texas two-year college, campus, and district presidents and chancellors, 70 presidents and 6 chancellors. (There are 49 public community colleges in Texas with 66 campuses, 4 public technical institutes, and 3 independent junior colleges for a total of 73 two-year college campuses. Our study, however, included 76 presidents and chancellors because of the unique administrative structure of some college districts and because we included the Executive Director/Dean of the Southwest Collegiate Institute for the Deaf of the Howard County Junior College District as one of our presidential respondents.) By the end of December, 1988, after two follow-up letters were mailed to non-respondents, we had received 54 completed questionnaires (50 from presidents and 4 from chancellors) for a response rate of 71 percent. Because of this high return rate, we believe that the findings of our investigation provide a very accurate view of the perceptions of Texas community college presidents and chancellors on issues and problems and needed research in the state.

FINDINGS

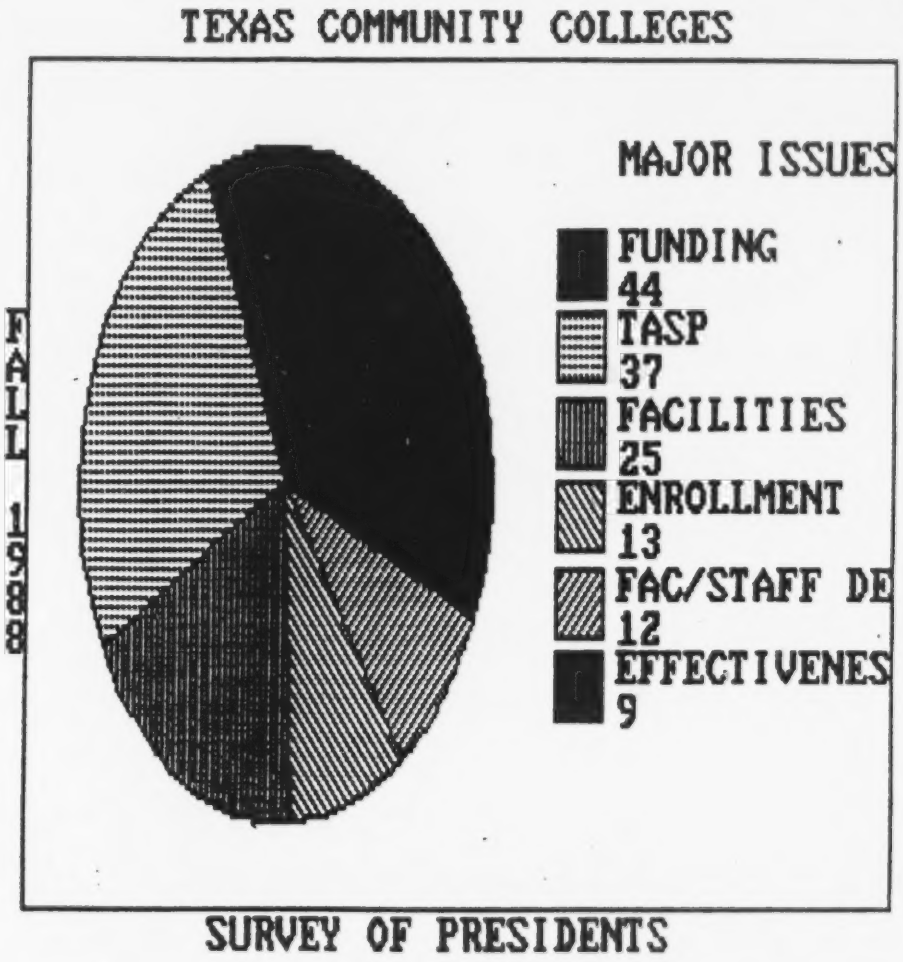
What were the findings in this study? We have organized our findings into six areas. These areas reflect the major purposes of our inquiry as well as our six research questions.

Issues and Problems Facing Texas Community/Junior College Presidents/Chancellors

The first area of our findings relates to the issues and problems facing Texas two-year college presidents. Table I contains a graphic illustration of the issues most-frequently mentioned by these presidents and chancellors in the Fall of 1988. As you can see from this Table, forty-four (44) or 81 percent of the 54 responding presidents/chancellors indicated that "funding" was one of the three major problems facing their college campus or campuses this year. One might have expected this finding since this is the year the legislature is meeting in Texas to determine college funding for the next two years. However, it might be interesting to replicate this study in other states or at the national level to see if funding is the major issue facing community college presidents in other areas of the country.

The second most frequently mentioned issue or problem was "TASP", the Texas Academic Skills Program. This newly mandated testing program requires that all community college and university students must successfully complete a statewide basic skills assessment test before they can take more than nine (9) hours of college work. Thirty-seven (37) of the 54 presidents/chancellors (or 69 percent of those responding) mentioned TASP as one of their three major concerns. While this concern may not be found in other states this year, it certainly is on the minds of these chief executive officers (CEOs). There

TABLE I


TEXAS COMMUNITY COLLEGES
FALL 1988
MAJOR ISSUES
FUNDING
44
TASP
37
FACILITIES
25
ENROLLMENT
13
FAC/STAFF DE
12
EFFECTIVENES
9
SURVEY OF PRESIDENTS

is a great deal of uncertainty in the state as to how this new testing system will impact student enrollments, funding patterns, curriculum and instruction programs, and general college operating procedures. As we will see in a few minutes, the Texas presidents and chancellors also see this as an area for numerous research studies.

Other issues and problems facing Texas community college presidents are "facilities", "enrollment trends", "faculty/staff development concerns", and "institutional effectiveness" in that order. One can begin to see a research agenda for our state emerging from this first set of findings.

Solutions Being Tried or Proposed to Solve Identified Issues and Problems

Our second set of findings related to the solutions Texas presidents and chancellors were using to solve the above mentioned issues and problems this year. Strategies to solve the funding problem seemed to be focused on the state legislature. Personal contacts and group lobbying to state senators and representatives were solutions mentioned by many of the respondents. A second and alternative plan upon which attention is also being focused is local tax reorganization and/or bond issues. A third group of solutions being tried to solve the funding problem were included in these presidential responses to our survey:

. Cut back on approved programs.

- Postpone approved activities.
- Expand or intensify recruiting.
- District expansion planning.
- College reorganization.
- Re-evaluate goals and objectives.
- Tighten budget control.
- Develop off campus programs.
- Planning committees.
- Rebudgeting studies.
- "Get leaner and meaner."
- Request emergency funding.
- Find foundation support.
- Find business support.
- Accentuate part-time faculty.
- Cut equipment purchases.
- Austerity plans.

Even with these possible actions, increasing state and local funding levels seem to be the most promising solutions to the funding problem.

With respect to the TASP problem, or "opportunity" depending on your perspective, we found many CEOs readying research and new programs to cut any enrollment losses early and preparing for the worst. Major solutions and activities staged to institutionalize TASP included:

- Administering local tests.

- Mail-outs for early enrollment of high school students.
- TASP committees.
- Release time for faculty to cross train.
- Staff reorganization.
- Local research as TASP unfolds.
- Workshops.
- Class sizes increased.
- Determining if TASP is appropriate for the deaf.
- Hiring additional faculty.

The great fear related to the Texas Academic Skills Program is that it will narrow the open door with new entry restrictions, a trend that concerns all Texas two-year college presidents.

Time will not permit me to describe some of the other solutions being tried to solve the issues and problems facing Texas chief executive officers. We are preparing a research monograph for the Texas Junior College Association and the 76 Texas community/junior college presidents and chancellors that will contain a listing of all of the responses to this investigation. Institutions will not be identified in this publication but you may want to contact me for a copy of this report in May. It will contain all of the actual responses upon which our comments are based today.

New Administrative Programs in Texas Community/Junior Colleges

The second part of our survey asked the presidents/chancellors to identify two major new administrative programs or efforts on their campuses this past fall. We received quite a long list of new programs in this part of the study. Outlined below is a selected listing of some of the new administrative programs we identified:

1. Board approved strategic plan.
2. Institutional effectiveness programs.
3. Executive loan program.
4. Administrative planning system.
5. Established academic counsel (teachers only).
6. Administrative counsel (all faculty and teachers).
7. International center and study abroad program.
8. International business program.
9. OPERA: computerized purchasing/accounting system.
10. Computerized and integrated all offices.
11. Microwave transmission between campuses.
12. Rotating staff between campuses.
13. Five year strategic plans started.
14. PEP: preparation, excellence, perseverance.
15. Comprehensive week-end college.
16. Participative marketing program.
17. New business and industry support group.
18. Student tutoring program.

From these and other responses we hope to develop an inventory of

new administrative initiatives in Texas each year. Hopefully, this sharing of information across institutions will assist presidents and chancellors in solving some of the new issues and problems they face on an annual basis. This type of sharing should also enhance communication among the presidents and chancellors in the state.

Inventory of New Curriculum and Instruction Programs in Texas Community/Junior Colleges

Also in the second part of our survey, we asked the presidents/chancellors to identify two new curriculum and instruction programs on their campuses this past fall. Here again we found many new and exciting innovations. Listed below is the inventory of new curriculum and instruction programs found in our research:

- Computer Numeric Technology
- Citizenship Classes for Aliens
- Eastern Airlines Pilot-Entry Program
- Honors Course
- Fire Science Technology
- Telecommunications
- Precision Optics Technology
- TASP Program
- Manufacturing Technology Program
- Registered Nursing Program
- SRO: Students Reaching Out

- Ford ASSET Program - Working With Ford Motor Company Dealers
- Cosmetology Program
- Computer Software Technologies
- Equine Technology
- Legal Assisting
- Physical Fitness Technology
- Personnel Computer Support
- Drama Program
- Plastics Technologies
- International Trade
- Jewelry Plating
- Chemical Dependency Program
- CAD/CAM Program
- Law Enforcement
- Aviation Program for Pilots
- Microprecision Technology

Most of these new curriculum and instruction programs were in the occupational education area. This does raise the question as to "What new programs are being tried to strengthen the transfer programs in Texas community colleges?" The improvement of general education and transfer programs has been an area of major concern in the community college field in recent years. Our findings suggest that more research may be needed to determine why Texas and perhaps other two-year colleges are not

developing or reporting new curriculum and instruction programs in this important area.

Needed Research In Texas Community Colleges

Our next to last set of research findings related to needed research in Texas community colleges. We asked the 76 presidents and chancellors to describe two research studies they would like to see conducted on their campuses this year. Table II on the next page shows their responses to this question. As you can see from this graph, the three most frequently mentioned areas for further researcher were the:

- Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP)
- Enrollment/Retention
- Outcomes/Institutional Effectiveness

Twenty-six (26) or 48 percent of the CEOs wanted to see some research conducted on the impact of TASP on their institutions, faculty, and/or students this year. This was by far the most frequently mentioned area for research. It is interesting to note that "funding," one of the presidents and chancellors major concerns in this study was not viewed by many CEOs as an area needing additional research this year. Perhaps there is the feeling that research on TASP will be of assistance in future years, whereas funding studies would not be of much help in this funding year.

The presidents and chancellors provided a long list of needed research studies that will be of value to our UNT faculty

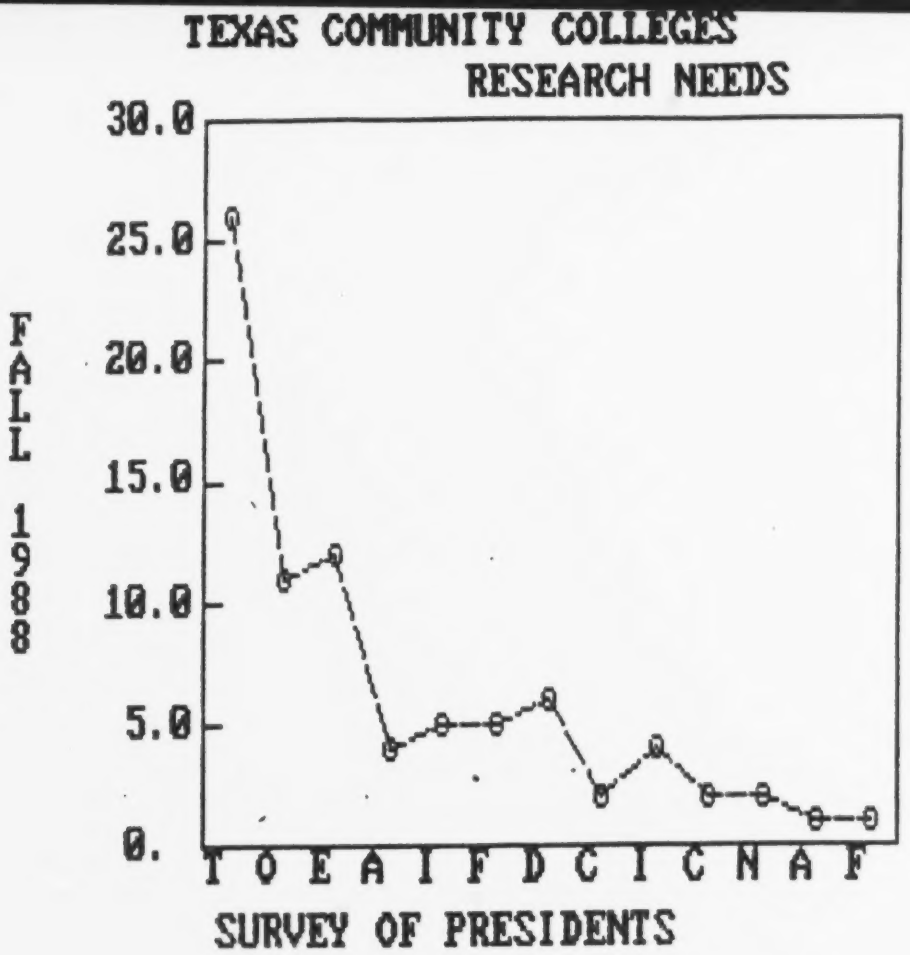


TABLE II

CATEGORIES OF RESEARCH	RESPONSES
T = TEXAS ACADEMIC SKILLS PROGRAM (TASP)	26
E = ENROLLMENT/RETENTION	12
O = OUTCOMES/INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS	11
D = DEMOGRAPHICS	6
I = INDUSTRIAL/VOCATIONAL ISSUES	5
F = FUNDING	5
A = AT-RISK & MINORITY ISSUES	4
I = CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION	4
C = CURRICULUM	2
N = NON-CREDIT COURSES	2
C = COUNSELING	2
A = ATHLETICS	1

and doctoral students. This list appears on the next page under the heading "Selected List of Needed Research." While this is not a complete list of the research studies recommended by Texas community college presidents, it will give you a good idea of the research needs of practitioners in the field. We are using this list to develop a doctoral student agenda at the University of North Texas.

Current Research Studies on Texas Community College Campuses

Our last area of study was to determine what type of research, if any, was being conducted on the campuses of Texas community/junior colleges. As we all know there is currently a greater push for more research in the community college field. This need for more research was reflected in the first AACJC Conference on research priorities a few years ago. We were pleasantly surprised to find that there was quite a bit of research being conducted on the campuses of the two-year colleges in our state. The quality of this research however, still needs further investigation.

Following the page of "Selected List of Needed Research" is a list of "Selected Research Studies in Progress" in Texas community/junior colleges. As you can see from this list, there is a great deal of diversity in the types of research projects being conducted on these campuses. New ways are needed to help colleges share the findings of these studies with other colleges in our state and with other two-year colleges around the

SELECTED LIST OF NEEDED RESEARCH

- Student Outcomes Per Discipline
- Institutional Effectiveness
- Dropouts vs. Failures
- TASP Transfers to the Four-Year College
- Classroom Teaching vs. Learning
- Student Retention Studies
- Effectiveness of Appraisal and Advisement
- DACUM Process Study of Occupational Programs
- Educational Competency as Related to Core Curriculum
- Student Demographics and Trends
- Receivable Enrollment Projection Model
- Student Success Indicator Model
- Faculty Workload
- Registration Process
- Raising Student Expectations and Achievement
- First Time Student Motivation
- Student Achievement vs Credit Hour Load
- TASP Impact Study
- Minority Enrollment and Follow-Up
- Effects of Mandatory Course Placement
- Correlate ASSET Scores to Academic Success
- New Occupational Training Needs
- Transfer GPA vs. University Graduation Rates
- New Admissions Program vs. Enrollment
- TASP Scores vs. Grades
- Success Rates of GED Students
- Remedial to College Level Competency.
- Minimal TASP vs. Minimal Passing Scores
- The "no-risk" Student vs. Success
- Follow-Up on Remedial Success
- Athletic Programs vs. Benefits
- Current Students Who Do Not Meet TASP Standards
- TASP Scores vs. Actual Grades
- Effectiveness of Grants

SELECTED RESEARCH STUDIES IN PROGRESS

- Lone Star Student Tracking
- Community Needs vs. College Image
- Student Perception of Quality Programs
- Management Information Systems
- 5 Year Student Outcomes Survey
- TASP Baseline Study
- Institutional Master Plan
- Student Enrollment, Success Patterns
- Effectiveness of Remedial Math Placement Tests
- Faculty effectiveness in the Classroom
- Drug Prevention and Intervention Survey
- ACT and ASSET Validity Studies
- SACS Self-Study
- Deaf Student Field Test for TASP
- SOI: Learning Breakthrough for the Deaf
- Demographic and Test Score Analysis of 1st Time Students
- Test Score and GPA Correlation
- Analysis of 130 Graduate Records
- Computer English vs. Student Achievement
- ITV vs. Traditional Courses
- Comparative Study of Fees
- ACT vs. Actual Grades

country. We hope that by sharing this information in our state, more two-year colleges will begin to work on cooperative research projects.

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

This research study had a number of purposes. We are still in the process of fulfilling these purposes by providing Texas community college presidents and chancellors with an inventory of their 1988-89 concerns, solutions to problems, new administrative programs, new curriculum and instruction programs, concerns for research, and ongoing research efforts. Our research monograph to the Texas community college presidents/chancellors this spring should further help to meet these purposes. Our goal is to make this an annual survey in the state of Texas with the respondents identified by name and institution. (In our current study responses were anonymous.) This should facilitate problem solving, communication, the sharing of new programs, and the expansion of cooperative research activity among Texas community colleges.

Our goal in sharing this report with you today was to stimulate your thinking about possible research studies similar to this one in your own state. We also hope that this paper might give you and/or your doctoral students some new ideas for research in the community college field. This study has helped our community college program set some research priorities for the next few years. We think that it is important that our

research studies and the research studies of our doctoral students be based on the major problems facing two-year colleges in our state and nation.

Thank you for your attention and interest. We look forward to your suggestions as to how we could improve this annual survey and feedback to the chief executive officers in Texas.

ERIC Clearinghouse for Junior Colleges JUL 14 1989